



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 21, 2006

***GOVERNORS PUSH FOR WHITE HOUSE SUPPORT OF 'SCAAP'
Program Meant to Reimburse States for Prison Costs***

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger are spearheading an effort with nine other governors, calling for the White House to support the states' request for federal dollars to help states recover the cost of imprisoning illegal immigrants. Under the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is supposed to fully reimburse the states for the cost of incarcerating undocumented immigrants who have committed state offenses, but rarely does so.

The 11 governors transmitted a letter to President Bush this week, urging the White House to include \$950 million in its budget proposal for FY 2008. The President's budget priorities will be released to Congress in February of 2007, and it will be up to members to accept the White House's proposals or enact their own.

The letter reads: "These funds are critical in at least partially offsetting the costs incurred to taxpayers in our states as a result of the failure to control illegal entries along our international borders."

Arizona has sent multiple invoices (totaling nearly \$300 million in expenses and interest) to the federal government over the last two years, but has yet to receive payment. Other states have since followed Napolitano's lead, sending bills to DOJ, asking for reimbursement.

The letter continues: "We are committed to continuing to work with your Administration and the Congress to protect our nation. However, until the federal government can achieve its goal of restoring safety and security throughout our border regions, every effort should be made to compensate the state and local governments who have stepped up to fill this gap by policing the regions and incarcerating criminal aliens at their own considerable expense."

The letter is signed by Governors Janet Napolitano, AZ; Arnold Schwarzenegger, CA; Bill Richardson, NM; Thomas Vilsack, IA; Christine Gregoire, WA; Phil Bredesen, TN; Jon Corzine, NJ; Ted Kulongoski, OR; Anibal Acevedo Vilá, Puerto Rico; Brad Henry, OK; and Kathleen Sebelius, KS. It is attached in PDF format.